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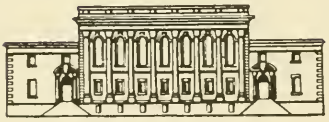

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The Vision of India in English Literature

by

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Introduction

Anthony Burgess in The Novel Now defines two types of 'exotic' novels in English literature, the one written by "a native of the United Kingdom that probes into the essence of a British colony or dominion or protectorate..." the other, by "a native of one of these that, in the stream of fiction in English, looks at that essence as it expresses itself in a tradition he takes for granted."[1] The importance of the Indian sub-continent within the British Empire is attested to by the well-known cliche that India was 'the jewel in the crown' of the Empire. For reasons which will not be fully explored in this chapter, the interaction of the British with the Indians constituted one of the biggest challenges to both.

The evidence of this challenge lies in the literature that came out of the imperial period. The preoccupation of these writers, British and Indian, with their impact on each other, constitutes a fascinating documentation of the social, cultural and psychological effects of the interaction of one civilization with another. A notable factor of the British rule in India is that after a hundred and fifty years, the British withdrew to Europe without demonstrating much visible change in outlook which might have been occasioned by such a long period of occupation in a totally foreign environment. For instance, we have ample literature on their encounter with India but hardly anything on the post-colonial experience of the British. It would appear that the British character has succeeded in maintaining that insularity which characterized its rule in India, an insularity which ensured the establishment of an exclusive, ruling class,

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maintaining an almost insurmountable barrier between their consciousness of themselves as 'British' and as rulers versus the native population.

The first chapter of this essay deals specifically with the literature included in Burgess' first category of exotic novels. Writers from Kipling to Jhabvala trace the British-Indian encounter from the early years of this century up to the present day. There is also a significant body of literature in India arising from Burgess' second category, the results of over a century of foreign rule. That the Indian writers in the second chapter of this essay chose English as their medium of expression is in itself proof of the immense impact of the colonial period on the Indian character. That most of these writers have chosen to express the cultural disorientation and confusion which arose from this contact attests to another important fact of modern colonization - the incomplete absorption of one totally foreign culture by another. For the Indian, particularly, this conflict remains even today. It is too soon to say if, eventually, this "stupefaction of a people", to use U. S. Naipaul's rather strong term, will dissolve into a new and fresh emergence of national identity.

As for the significance of Indian writing in English, or "Indo-Anglian" literature as it has often been called, it is also recent enough to prevent a thorough understanding or appreciation of its place within the mainstream of English literature. The quality of Indo-Anglian literature varies - some of it, as in R. K. Narayan is close to excellence while a great deal of it is somewhat uncertain both in its adoption of a foreign language and in its choice of subject matter. Nevertheless, as a document of one civilization reacting and counteracting with another is its chief importance.

Chapter I - 'India Through Western Eyes'

The pre-eminence of India in the exotic novels of English literature owes itself greatly to the writings of Rudyard Kipling who, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, published a considerable number of tales and short stories set in India. His novel Kim, published in 1901, is held by many critics to be his finest work on India. There is little evidence in it of the strongly imperialistic mentality of his celebrated poem "The White Man's Burden," although strains of Rule Britannia are subtly present in the book. Nevertheless, Kim the hero of Kipling's novel is white only by an accident of birth, for in every aspect he is the epitome of an eastern bazaar urchin, and denies the sahibdom imposed on him by a forced but brief English education.

The novel, approached as an Indian novel by a western writer, is quite remarkable, alternating between a tale reminiscent of an oriental fantasy for children, and one seeking to expound eastern religion and philosophy. It is best seen as a combination of both these elements, the fantastical side being embodied in the figure of Kim and his adventures, while the spiritual aspect is represented by the Tibetan lama. However, this distinction is not always clearly evident as Kim too participates in the mysticism of the lama, who in turn is unknowingly but inextricably involved in Kim's intelligence activities. In fact, a weakness of the novel is Kipling's failure to successfully reconcile these two aspects of his story.

Regarding the exotic orientalism of Kim, Kipling presents a sympa-

thetic and often sensitive account of Indian common life, by placing Kim in the midst of the teeming bazaar life of northern India. When analysing the role of Kim as intelligence agent for the British, the question arises as to why Kipling placed a white child in such a setting when an Indian urchin would have served the same purpose with little difference to the plot of the novel. Part of the answer may lie simply in the fact that Kipling was writing at a time when most of his reading public was English and which exhibited a liking for stories of travel in the far away, exotic outposts of the Empire. Thus Kipling created a fascinating tale of an English boy in such a situation, consciously enhancing the story with rich and vivid descriptions of the Indian landscape and its varied peoples. Hence the sense of oriental fantasy mentioned earlier. The other part of the answer to this question of Kim's white skin maybe related to the subtle imperial undertone of the novel. It must be admitted that, although Kim's cleverness and wit are picked up from the bazaar environment, he is undoubtedly the leader of his group, and is most definitely conscious of his British antecedents. Kipling ensures our understanding of this fact at the beginning of the novel where Kim is shown sitting astride the Zam-Zammeh gun in defiance of municipal orders, because the gun is a symbol of the conqueror, and so is Kim "... since the English held the Punjab and Kim was English."[2] Kipling offers this as a justification for Kim to kick the Indian boy off the Zam-Zammeh.

Apart from this initial assertion of Kim's superior ancestry, Kipling strives hard to maintain a balance between Kim's English and Indian identities. In the first section, Kim embarks on a search for the red bull on the green field, the ensign of his father's regiment, beside the lama, who is seeking the mystical River of the Arrow. Kim's next set of adven-

tures revolves around his education at the hands of the British, who take him away from the lama and train him for their intelligence service. Kim's period in the English school is, perhaps, the weakest section in the book. The lama, for instance, mysteriously produces large sums of money to support Kim's education, even though he has ostensibly cut off all worldly ties in order to attain enlightenment. The improbability of this episode, together with Kipling's presentation of the amicable relations between the rather stupid Father Victor and old Mahbub over Kim, reinforce the notion of the book as being an exotic thriller for children. For instance, Mahbub the wily horsetrader kidnaps Kim, but kindly returns him the same day. Likewise, when the boy disappears on the road during his holidays, Mahbub Ali talks the Colonel out of his worry by saying, rather enigmatically, "He is perfecting his knowledge. Think, Sahib! He has been three months at school." (p. 125) In Kipling's view, the British and Indian work together in perfect accord, for the preservation of the British Empire against the Russians and local Indian dissident rulers. We revert to the imperial theme with Kim's involvement in the 'Great Game', for by successfully completing his mission against the Russians, he has proved his sahibdom.

Kipling's account of the lama and his spiritual progress forms the other important theme of Kim, although it could also be seen as an integral part of the oriental fantasy woven around Kim and his adventures. Benita Parry, in her book Delusions and Discoveries,[3] provides a detailed study of the lama's activities in terms of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. Following Parry's analysis, the lama is transformed into a bodhisattva at the conclusion of the novel, as he rejects nirvana in order to help Kim through his earthly life. Kipling, of all the writers dealt with in this

chapter, provides the most straightforward and sympathetic treatment of the figure of the holy man in India. His account is also rather simplistic, as, very often the lama appears quite stupid and helpless, even though this aspect of him highlights the extent of Kim's kindness and devotion to him. The lama is also treated, perhaps unconsciously on Kipling's part, in a comic light. For instance, at the peak of his spiritual progress, when he sees into the causes of all things and discovers the River of the Arrow, we are provided with an account of his enlightenment by Babu, a delightfully comic creation of Kipling - "By Jove, O'Hara, do you know he is afflicted with infirmity of fits. Yess, I tell you. Cataleptic too, if not epileptic. I found him in such a state under a tree in 'articulo mortem' and he jumped up and walked into a brook and he was nearly drowned but for me. I pulled him out." The lama's final pronunciation of deliverance from the wheel for both of them appears ironic, as Parry has noted, considering that Kim is now an accomplished spy. However, Kipling does not seem to have intended this irony, as he concludes the novel with the satisfying picture of the lama in bliss - "He crossed his hands on his lap and smiled, as a man who has won Salvation for himself and his beloved."

This reconciliation of the discrete goals of the two characters, namely the spiritual achievement of the lama and the 'sahib'dom of Kim as a successful spy, contributes its share towards the romanticism of Kim. That is, the lumping together of both men's lives under the shield of Salvation, is brought about by Kipling without a realization of the irony of Kim's position as a spy. In the novel, Kipling envisions no conflict between English and Indian, or East and West. Kim himself represents the union of both polarities, despite the muted imperialistic tone of the novel. The chief merit of Kim lies in the detailed descriptions of Indian

life, which are glossed over however by the exotic, romantic flavour of the work. This latter element is one which will be found rarely, if at all, in the works of subsequent writers, who adopt a more realistic, critical, although not necessarily appreciative, appraisal of the Indian sub-continent.

The inclusion of Leonard Woolf's novel The Village in the Jungle, subtitled A Novel of Ceylon which was first published in 1913, may at first glance appear out of place. However, it provides an interesting and plausible bridge between the romanticism of Kipling's approach to British India and such writers as Forster and Scott, who exemplify a completely new approach to the Raj and its presence in India. The Island of Ceylon is probably the country closest to India, not only geographically, but historically and culturally as well. Woolf's account of the village of Baddegama in Southeastern Ceylon, the prey of the 'civilised' forces of the outside world and its own surroundings within the jungle, could easily parallel any village in a similar position in India.

The chief claim to excellence of The Village in the Jungle is its sensitive and convincing story of a people and a way of life which was fast becoming extinct, and in whose existence Woolf saw a beauty and purity to be found nowhere else. In the second volume of his autobiography entitled Growing, Woolf provides a firsthand account of his experiences as Assistant Government Agent in Ceylon, and in particular, of his views of the villagers with whom he dealt and the impact of British rule on their way of life. The unique insight and sympathy for the rural life of Village in the Jungle, which we sense Woolf must have possessed in great measure in order to have written such a novel, is confirmed in his autobiography - "I am glad that I had for some years, in what is called the prime of life,

experience of the slow-pulsing life of this most ancient type of civilization. I lived inside it to some extent... and felt a curious sympathy with the people, born and bred to its slowness, austerity, harshness, so that some of its rhythm and tempo like that of the lagoons and the jungle, crept permanently into my heart and bones. It was almost the last chance for anyone to see it or live in it."[4] The constant threat of the jungle and the constant fear of it under which the villagers of Baddegama lived, form the setting of Woolf's novel. The fortunes of Silindu and his family symbolize those of the village of Baddegama and its inhabitants. Silindu also represents the type of villager who was closest to the jungle and farthest away from the corrupt traders and headman whose victim he becomes. Although a cultivator like the others, Silindu's real passion was hunting, and "he knew the jungle better than anyone else in the whole district."[5] Woolf's description of Silindu is always in terms of the animals in the jungle - "... this silent little man, with the pinched up face of a grey monkey..."; "very often he would moan, whine, and twitch in his sleep like a dog; he slept as lightly as a deer..." (p. 9) Woolf's most extended metaphor with regard to Silindu occurs in the latter half of the novel, where he talks of the wounded buffalo which is pursued by the hunters, but lies quietly until "at last he knows and is angry - very angry - and he stands waiting for them." It is a striking image in which Silindu is transmuted from hunter to hunted, thus completing his identification with the jungle.

Silindu's misfortunes originated in the system of debt around which village life functioned. Unable to honour his debt to the headman, he is framed in a burglary and taken to be tried in court. Woolf's portrayal of the court scene is a masterpiece and is one of the highlights of the

novel. We are forcibly reminded of the famous trial in A Passage to India, which is one of the foci of that novel as well. In The Village in the Jungle it is a pathetic mockery, manipulated by the cunning headman to promote his own welfare and the devastation of Silindu and his family. If the situation of Silindu and Babun was not so appalling, the court scene would certainly be comic. Apart from being completely ignorant of court procedure or even its function, the two men are intimidated by the judge, who is a white man and speaks a strange language. Together with a bullying interpreter, the confusion is complete - "The judge said something to the interpreter who asked them their names in an angry, threatening voice. Silindu had forgotten what his 'ge'[(a)] name was; the interpreter became still more angry at this, and Silindu still more sullen and confused. From time to time the judge said a few words in English to the interpreter; Silindu and Babun were never quite certain whether he was or was not speaking to them, or whether, when the interpreter spoke to them in Sinhalese, the words were really his own, or whether he was interpreting what the judge had said." (p. 138) Woolf was very forceful in condemning the imperial machinery which imposed such a system on a foreign people, who had little or no conception of its function or purpose. In Sowing, Woolf talks of "the absurdity of a people of one civilization and mode of life trying to impose its rule upon an entirely different civilization and mode of life." (p. 193)

The English judge, who appears briefly in The Village in the Jungle, is an important figure in terms of Woolf's personal view of his role as arbiter of the lives of the villagers. He is, in many ways, a personification of Woolf himself, sharing an instinctive appraisal of Silindu's

(a) Village of origin

character, as Woolf did with his villagers. Silindu, likewise, instantly feels a rapport with the judge, who hunts in the jungle too, and they communicate through the metaphor of the jungle. The judge explains to his subordinate Silindu's murder of the tradesman, by comparing him to the animals - "And it's the same with these jungle people. They want to be left alone ... to live quietly ... It must have taken a lot of cornering and torturing and shooting to rouse a man like that." (p. 180) In administering his brand of justice to the people of the jungle, the judge is inadvertently part of the system Woolf condemns. However, he is treated sympathetically in the novel, at least for conscientiously carrying out his duties with more understanding of the villager's mentality than his native subordinates are even capable of. Again, we turn to Woolf's autobiography, for further elucidation on the position of the judge and his function in the society of the novel. Woolf describes himself as being obsessed with his work, but not with "the European side of it, the white side of it, the kind of second-rate (as it appeared to me) pomp and circumstance which surrounded one..." (p. 178)

His comment, coming as it does from a colonial administrator, is particularly interesting when applied to the novels of Forster and Scott in which the types of imperialists Woolf despises are abundantly present. The Village in the Jungle is the product of a unique sensibility, not only amongst the writings of Westerners on India, but also amongst those works by Indian novelists. Woolf is a great distance away from the romantic and rather naive vision of Kipling, and from such Indian writers as Markandaya and Anand, who like Woolf, also chose to focus on lower class and rural life. The honesty and credibility of Woolf's vision stemmed mainly from his affection for, and interest in, the people of the jungle, with the important distinction

that "There was no sentimentality about this; I did not idealize or romanticize the people or the country; I just liked them aesthetically and humanly and socially." (p. 180) It is interesting to note that The Village in the Jungle is hardly known outside Ceylon and is certainly out of print in England. One wonders if this does not attest to the unwillingness of the British to accept Woolf's treatment of a subject people with the Empire.

E. M. Forster's A Passage to India, published in 1924, is even more deeply concerned with the conflict between two cultures forced to interact on the basis of ruler and ruled. The novel explores, with great subtlety, the essence of the British character in India and of the Indian character when confronted by the British, exposing the peculiarities of both. The depth of A Passage to India lies in Forster's attempt to explore the larger issue of the meaning and significance of existence itself, as viewed by the Indian in his environment, and, more interestingly, by the British who, placed in foreign surroundings, have to reassess themselves in terms of their new existence.

The novel itself is divided into three sections, with the mosque, the Marabar Caves and the temple symbolizing three different metaphysical interpretations of the universe, as well as providing the settings for the British-Indian encounters, both functions being closely woven together. In contrast with the two preceding novels which dealt with life on the road or in the jungle, A Passage to India is more complex in its depiction of British India, as it deals with urban, middle-class Indians and the upper echelons of Anglo-Indian society. For instance, the Indian side of the novel contains such memorable characters as Dr. Aziz and Professor Godbole, who represent the Muslim and Hindu communities respectively, in

Chandrapore. Aziz is charming, poetic, erratic; Godbole, remote, mystical and a Brahmin. Both stand for two of the spiritual options offered by India, which are symbolized by the beautiful, moonlit mosque of the first section of the novel, and the glorious Hindu temple in which the festival of universal love is being celebrated in the third section.

The British side of the novel is seen chiefly in terms of the club and the courtroom. In both settings they are subjected to a merciless if humorous attack by Forster. Mrs. Moore visits the mosque in order to escape a performance of Cousin Kate, played behind closed windows "lest the servants should see their mem-sahibs acting."(~~p. 24~~) The playing of the National Anthem "reminded every member of the club that he or she was British and in exile."[6] In the next major club scene, on the occasion of the Turton's bridge party, Mrs. Turton the Collector's wife advises the newcomers to India on how to regard themselves - "You're superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the Ranis, and they're on an equality." Forster presents the British community with its worst setback at the trial of Aziz when Adela Quested withdraws her charge of attempted rape, deflating the swollen sense of outrage and comradeship in common distress which they had been building up for each other over the past few weeks. As it is, they create enough diversion during the trial by moving 'en masse' up and down the court room. This elevation of stature the British indulge in, which Forster brings forward for ridiculing, is also noted by Woolf in Sowing - "We all pretended to be tougher, more British, more home-sick than we really were..." (p. 47)

Forster's depiction of the social intercourse between the two sides is marvellously ironic, conveying the absolute lack of communication and irreparable misunderstandings of each other's social customs and nuances. Ronny

is insufferably contemptuous of Aziz's unbuttoned collar - "and there you have the Indian all over; inattention to detail; the fundamental slackness that reveals the race." (p. 81) - not knowing that Aziz had lent his stud to Fielding at the price of his own collar in a moment of spontaneous and touching generosity. Similarly, there is the humorous but inexplicable episode of the ladies' visit to the Bhattacharya's where the promised carriage never turned up, even though the Indian couple ostensibly cancelled a visit to Calcutta that day in honour of their English visitors. Forster, pursuing illogic even further, draws a picture of Indian hospitality when it does go into operation in the middle section of the novel entitled 'Caves.' The reader, along with poor Adela and Mrs. Moore, is thus flung from one Indian extreme to another, from the unfulfilled invitation to an overdose of hospitality at the hands of Aziz, complete with a regiment of servants and an elephant.

By attempting to grasp this rather intangible aspect of the Indian psyche, Forster exposes the Indian group to three levels of British humanity. The first, of which the 'Turtons and Burtons' are a part, attempt to maintain as large a distance as possible from the 'natives', as we have already seen. At the other extreme is Fielding who, a misfit in the club amongst his countrymen, enjoys, although for a brief period, a meaningful relationship with the Indians. Adela Quested and Mrs. Moore fall inbetween these two categories. Their experiences with the Indian group also relate them very closely to Forster's second and larger issue, the 'metaphysical' aspect of A Passage to India. Both ladies, fresh from England, in the early part of the novel, are desirous of coming in contact with the 'real India', a mystical entity to which many characters are drawn, here and in the novels to follow. Mrs. Moore makes a promising start by meeting Aziz at the mosque

and who identifies her immediately as an 'oriental', a compliment he pays to her son at the conclusion of the novel. Mrs. Moore brings herself into conflict with Ronny who believes that he is "... out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force... We're not pleasant in India, and we con't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do." (p. 50) Mrs. Moore's refutal of her son's point, and her insistence that "India is part of the earth. And God has put us on earth in order to be pleasant to each other. God... is ... love", is challenged however in the Marabar Caves where she undergoes some kind of spiritual crisis brought on by the "bou-oum ou-boum" echoes of the caves. From this moment on, Mrs. Moore suffers a horrifying awareness that "the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul ... She didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God." (p. 150) The Marabar caves, then, symbolize the vision of emptiness and meaninglessness by which Mrs. Moore is overcome, and which causes her to leave the country only to die at sea. But, just as this strange landscape induces her terrifying vision, it also lends immortality to the old lady, converting her into a minor deity at the trial where the crowd chants the magic incantation "Esmiss Esmoore". Mrs. Moore was unknowingly linked to the Indian spirit in her instinctive awareness of Aziz's innocence. Likewise, her strange mention of a ghost with regard to the Nawab's car accident, even though she was quite ignorant of his fears of a man whom he had killed accidentally.

Adela initially shares Mrs. Moore's enthusiasm for the 'real India', but lacks her instinctive grasp of the Indian way of thinking, or rather, of feeling. Mrs. Moore tells Aziz at the mosque - "I don't think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them." (p. 23)

At the end of the novel when Adela and Fielding are composing a rather unsuccessful letter of apology to Aziz, he tells her - "The first time I saw you, you were wanting to see India, not Indians, and it occurred to me; Ah, that won't take us far. Indians know whether they're liked or not - they cannot be fooled here." (p. 260) The difference between Mrs. Moore and Adela in their approach to India is that the old lady was, for the most part, unaware of her intangible bond with India, but when it was broken she became confused. Adela, on the other hand, gains some stature after the cave episode and trial. She is honest enough to withdraw her charge of rape. Adela is also driven to speculate on the mystical powers of Mrs. Moore - "Were there worlds beyond which they could never touch, or did all that is possible enter their consciousness?... Perhaps the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble so tiresomely are one, and the universe they mirror is one." (p. 263) But, whereas Mrs. Moore just gave up in the face of these hundred Indias, Adela is truthful enough to acknowledge the possibility of life being a mystery or, perhaps, a muddle. The withdrawal of both women from India, however, seems to be an admission of defeat and a reflection of Forster's concluding vision on the subject of Indian relations with the British and vice versa.

The final section of the novel entitled 'Temple' reinforces this idea of the ultimate negation of proper understanding between the two races. For instance, during the immersion of the Hindu deities in the river, Fielding's boat collides with Aziz's boat, and from out of the ensuing confusion of people, gods and oars their friendship is resurrected, but only for a brief moment. When they ride together as friends for the last time, their embrace is torn apart by the horses, and a hundred voices intervene between Fielding and Aziz saying, "No, not yet ... not there." So

concludes, one may fairly say, one of the best, if not the best, works of fiction in this field of English literature. None of the novels which have gone before or those to come are able to match A Passage to India in its artistic unity and depth of vision.

Paul Scott's tetralogy The Raj Quartet, over a period of about ten years from 1966-1975, cover the last years of the British Raj in India, from the Second World War to the Partition. The four novels are the first group of historical novels in this chapter, the preceding works having all arisen from their periods as contemporary writings. As a result of this hind-sight of twenty years on the setting sun of the British Empire, Scott is able to expand on many of the issues raised by Forster, as well as include a wealth of historical and political detail concerning the agitation for Independence and the British attempts to control civil unrest and prepare the country for self-rule. The novels focus mainly on the British administration, concentrating on that sector of the British rulers which Forster mentions only peripherally, the army. The military was obviously prominent during this period, owing to the threat of Japanese invasion and civil unrest within the country. One of Scott's leading character's is Ronald Merrick who is an army officer as well as having served in the Indian Police. The Layton family, which also plays a prominent part in the Quartet, is a military family, grappling with the problems of surviving in a foreign country which they are to abandon soon, while Colonel Layton is fighting in the war.

Scott's choice of the Anglo-Indian situation as a background for his novels was determined by his view that "in the closing years of the British power in India ... the British as a nation came to the end of themselves as they were and have not yet emerged from the shock of their own liberation."[7]

Hence his concentration on the British side of Anglo-India, only dealing with those Indians who were sufficiently anglicised to be able to move around on a social and political level with the British. We are far removed from the world of Kim or even Woolf's novel. Scott uses native India chiefly as a vast backdrop of seething crowds and unknown faces. Referring to the function of the novel, Scott said that - "the act of writing a novel is an act of asking questions, not answering them." In the Raj Quartet questions are raised implicitly by the author and often by the characters themselves, as to their purpose and position as imperial rulers of a country they rarely came into contact with, and which they were now preparing to leave to its own devices.

The form of the tetralogy is very different from the tightly woven structure of A Passage to India, or to Kim which is based on the journey motif and reaches a satisfying conclusion. Woolf's The Village in the Jungle has a circular pattern beginning and ending with the all-pervasive jungle. With The Quartet, however, it is impossible to obtain a complete or just picture of any character or event without placing the four novels together. Thus, characters weave in and out of all four works and Scott sheds as little or as much light on them as is appropriate to the angle of the narrative at that point. It is more suitable, therefore, to analyse The Quartet as a single, whole work, rather than each novel individually. In another comment on the tetralogy, Scott said that viewing people "in relation to their work was a subject no less important than their private lives."[8] The very fact of being rulers in an alien country ensured that the British followed a way of life in which the public and private aspects were inextricably bound together, particularly when dealing with the 'natives.' Scott's approach to his novels thus has a double focus, that of the British

striving to regulate their public image as rulers together with their private lives in a situation that has taken on an increasingly transient and temporary appearance, of "a nation (coming) to the end of themselves as they were..."

There are two main narrative threads in the four novels which follow the two categories mentioned above. The first or 'public' view contains Merrick at its centre, while the second narrative revolves around Daphne Manners. The complexity of the novels of the British situation in India demand that these divisions be not absolute. Merrick's public image is therefore closely tied in with his private depravities, which influence his actions and judgments as a British police officer. Likewise, Daphne Manners' love affair with Hari Kumar does not remain part of her private life for long and escalates into a political affair. To complicate matters further, both these figures are drawn together by a common interest in Kumar, who is Scott's chief Indian character and one who exemplifies the upheaval of values and priorities created by the imposition of one foreign culture on another.

Ronald Merrick's incursion into the public view of both British and Indian had its origins in the Bibighar gardens rape of Miss Manners, an episode with far reaching consequences in the tense political situation of India. Merrick's promptness in apprehending the alleged suspects, amongst whom was Hari Kumar, was motivated by his duty as a colonial law officer to safeguard the white population as well as by a personal vendetta against Hari Kumar. Regarding the first issue, Scott raises many questions on the British administration of law and justice. We realize that Merrick had not only planted evidence, but had implicated men who were obviously innocent. He was initially applauded for his prompt action by the British,

but as the actual story is unravelled through the four novels, we realize that not only was Merrick totally wrong, but that he was also unaware of his mistakes, truly believing in the guilt of the suspects even when there was no proper evidence. In the last novel A Division of the Spoils, Merrick's private debaucheries are uncovered by Perron which explain more deeply Merrick's dislike of Hari Kumar, who had been brought up and educated in a higher class of English society than Merrick.

The latter's violent and shocking death might seem merely a fitting end to a rather unsavoury character, but Scott provides us with no such simplistic explanation of Merrick's behaviour. In The Day of the Scorpion, the second novel in the tetralogy, Count Bronowsky, adviser to the Nawab of Mirat, puts forward an interesting observation on the administration of justice. The count, although he is aware of Merrick's error in the Bibighar episode, says this - "God save us anyway from a world where there's no room for passionate mistakes."[8] He adds that absolute detachment and objectivity in a ruler "always suggests a certain lack of concern. The concept of justice as a lady with a blindfold and a pair of scales someone else may lay a decisive finger on without her noticing has often struck me as questionable." (Ibid) We are reminded here of Forster's critical approach to Ronny who loudly asserts in A Passage to India that he is "just a servant of the government." Undoubtedly Merrick's passions outweighed his sense of justice in the Manners case which led to terrible consequences, particularly for Hari Kumar. But if we are sympathetic to the Count's view of the superiority of passionate mistakes over blindfolded objectivity, then Merrick cannot be condemned outright.

Further on in the same novel in a discussion with Sarah Layton on the withdrawal of the British from India, he pinpoints the disparity of knowl-

edge and understanding between those who actually administer India, and those who reside in the House of Commons for whom "Getting rid of India will be just one clause in a policy of reform dreamed up by intellectuals and implemented by the votes of millhands and post-office clerks..."(p. 212) He rebels against the rubberstamp age which discourages a man from acting as "an individual. As a person. As a fallible human being." (Ibid)

Merrick's and Bronowsky's views are echoed by Mohammed Ali Kasim, ex-chief Minister of Ranpur, in one of Scott's incursions into the Indian camp - MAK, as he is popularly referred to, in a perceptive comment to his son, attributes the Amritsar massacre to British sincerity not tyranny - "You can only charge them with sincerity and of being divided among themselves about what it is right to be sincere about."

MAK's observation on the varying degrees of sincerity which motivate the British is borne out by Merrick's account of Teddie's death in The Day of the Scorpion. Through his depiction of the British army, Scott illustrates the unusual relationship of 'Man-bap' - I am your father and your mother - between British officers and their Indian men. This 'attitude' was a curious mixture of superiority tempered by selflessness and a strong feeling of regimental loyalty. Teddie Bingham was killed in a trap while pursuing a deserter in the belief that 'Man-bap' would restore the regimental discipline - "I told you there was a touch of old-fashioned gallantry in it. All that paternalistic business really meant something to him." An illuminating aside here would be a comment made by Leonard Woolf in 1911 that "The days of paternalism... were over," a reason why he did not continue as a member of the colonial administration. By implication, Woolf believed in this concept of governing and so did poor Teddie. Although Merrick attempts to diminish Teddie's 'amateurish' act, he too displays a

similarly blind courage in trying to save his companion at the risk of his own life. To Sarah Layton, the acts of the two men are "a kind of madness, a sublime insanity" which in their complete disregard of everything else makes them larger than life. In Scott, then, we are presented with an aspect of the British unseen in the previous novels - a confused, complex courage in attempting to make the right decisions and take the most appropriate action in an alien situation from which men like Merrick, Bingham and Rowan try to extract some meaning and purpose. Scott also shows us those who fail to make any sense of their position, such as Sergeant Purvis who throws himself out of a window in A Division of the Spoils. A very striking feature of the 'public' narrative of these novels is the sense of an enormous, sometimes tortuous, piece of machinery which has been set in motion by the Raj, and is in fact the Raj, in order to govern this "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire; the trains, clerks, soldiers and servants all scurrying through the novels, more furiously so in these last years of the British reign in India.

Daphne Manners who is the focus of the 'private' narrative is, in herself, not a very prepossessing figure when compared with Merrick in the other narrative. Sarah Layton, in fact, is treated with greater depth and subtlety. Daphne's importance lies in her establishment of the most intimate level of communication between the British and Indian sides. Initially, she bears a superficial resemblance to Adela in Forster's novel - "Here we are, another of those English girls who come out here with bees in their bonnets..." However, as Merrick admits, it wasn't a bee at all but an open-minded attitude towards India unfathomable to the British. Both Adela's withdrawal of the rape charge against Aziz in A Passage to India, and Daphne's refusal to implicate Hari in her rape, are acts of

courage in the face of outraged British sensibility and pride, causing their rejection by white society. Hari's Englishness played a major role in complicating Daphne's association with him and accounted for a great deal of British hostility. Merrick's assessment of Hari is typical of the English attitude to this Indian version of an ex-Chillingburian - "He was out for revenge. Out to get his own back on us because back in India he couldn't pretend to be English any longer."

Hari Kumar's position of belonging neither to the English nor the Indian camp is a sad indictment of the imposition of the cultural standards of one civilization on another. Hari blames the British "for fostering the illusion his father had laboured under", and the pitiful condition he is reduced to in his sojourn in prison reflects Scott's implicit criticism of the imperial rulers. Perhaps the most touching moment in the story of Hari is when Perron in the last novel reads out an article from a newspaper for which Hari wrote articles under the pseudonym Philoctetes - "I walk home, thinking of another place, of seemingly endless summers... that recalling them now, it seems inconceivable to me that I looked at them and did not think of the summer just gone, and the spring soon to come, as illusions; as dreams, never fulfilled, never to be fulfilled."[9] This is the last glimpse we have of the white man in brown skin who has finally merged into anonymity with the millions of other brown faces in the background of India. An outright condemnation of the British presence comes from Sarah Layton with regard to Ahmed, the younger son of MAK in the employ of the Nawab, who is a victim of the riots following the Partition of India. Scott presents us with another relationship between a white woman and Indian man in which there existed an intangible bond - "Ahmed and I weren't in love. But we loved one another. We

recognized in each other the compulsion to break away from what I can only call a received life." (p. 616) Sarah Layton, like Daphne, did not fit into conventional British society, although a strong sense of family loyalty keeps her within its bounds. The massacre on the train is blamed on the British by Sarah - "I felt it was our responsibility... that after a hundred years or more it (Muslim-Hindu enmity) existed." Just as Daphne and Hari were doomed by their circumstances, Sarah's friendship with the Muslim is brutally destroyed by a racial hatred whose continuing existence she sees as proof of the British failure in India.

Scott does not fail to leave out another class of Britishers in India, the missionary-educator. Forster touches briefly on the subject when he rather mercilessly squashes the clerical duo Graysford and Sorley and their concept of divine hospitality - "We must exclude someone from our gathering or we shall be left with nothing." With regard to Barbie Batchelor and Edwina Crane, the two missionaries in The Quartet, Scott is mainly interested in their 'private' relationship with India. His portrait of Edwina Crane is profound - a courageous and devoted woman in her work, she comes to realize that all her years in India have lacked a true communion with its people. The Quartet begins with Edwina Crane's story in The Jewel in the Crown. This realization is forced upon her during the riots in Mayapore, when her car is destroyed and her companion Mr. Chandhuri is beaten to death. To atone for this separation of spirit between herself and India, she sits by his body holding his hand in the rain. Her words to no-one in particular as she sits there - "It's taken me a long time," she said, meaning not only Mr. Chandhuri. "I'm sorry it was too late." - are ominous in their despair. Some months later she sets fire to

herself in an emulation of the Indian rite of 'suttee', yet another act of atonement for her failure and those of other Britishers who allowed "this little matter of the colour of the skin which gets in the way of our seeing into each other's hearts." (p. 63) The spiritual desolation of Miss Crane is echoed to a worse degree in Barbie Batchelor whose story takes up most of Scott's third novel The Towers of Silence. Miss Crane's shocking end probably worsened Barbie's crisis, as she adored and admired the other woman deeply. Barbie is a more pathetic and less likeable character. Many people believed that Edwina's suicide was a deliberate act, performed when she was in full possession of her faculties. Barbie's spiritual and emotional desolation leads her into slow madness without reaching complete self-realization. One is reminded of Mrs. Moore in A Passage to India, another elderly woman who loses her belief in God and in an orderly universe during her visit to India. However, Scott does provide us with the figure of Sister Ludmilla, considered by some to be mad, who cared for the dead and dying and was quite sane in her tremendous selflessness and true faith in God. Perhaps these are indeed the two attributes essential for survival in India for this type of missionary figure.

Thus The Raj Quartet provides a broad as well as detailed exposure of the spectrum of Anglo-India. The Indian side of this spectrum is dealt with to a lesser extent, with Hari as its chief figure. The Nawab of Mivat and the politician MAK, of whom we are given interesting accounts, are two important types, one a local prince and the other part of the nationalist movement, which we will find recurring in the Indo-Anglian novels of the following chapter. In Scott's view of Indian society an important figure is Lady Chatterji with whom Daphne Manners lived, and the orthodox Hindu aunt

of Hari. There are also the Indian successors to the British inheritance of social life centered around the club. Again, all these elements are present very strongly in Indian writing, a reflection of the pervasive influence of the English manner of 'civilized' living in India which Scott portrays so vividly and accurately in The Raj Quartet.

His next novel Staying On, published in 1977, follows as a sequel of a sort to the Quartet. It is set in Pankot almost thirty years after the British withdrawal from India. Tusker and Lucy Smalley, who appear only briefly in the tetralogy as part of the military circle in Pankot, have chosen to retire permanently in India because, in Tusker's words, "... I can't just merely think of it as a place where I drew my pay for the first 25 years of my working life..."[10] He obviously could not obey the order to "bugger off" as they are not wanted there anymore. Through the Smalley's, Scott attempts to answer one of the enigmatic questions about the withdrawal from India - did the British just pick up and leave with little regard for a life-time and more spent in ruling, conditioning and influencing unalterably the lives of others and themselves. The younger generation apparently survived the transition as evidenced by Sarah Layton's letter to Lucy. Sarah has married Guy Perron who, after the Declaration of Independence, went back to his profession as lecturer in history. The issue is a problem, therefore, only for people like the Smalley's who are too old and insufficiently well off to be able to weather such a change. By chosing to stay on, or "hang on" in Tusker's words, they have achieved and maintained some slight prestige which was denied them in the tightly structured social and political hierarchy during the days of the Raj. However, the Smalley's existence is now being threatened by modern India, a symbol of which is the new five-story hotel, The Shiraz, being built over their

heads, and by the mercantilism of Lila Bhoolabhoy, their landlady.

Staying On is as much a novel about domesticity as it is about leftovers from the colonial era. The married life of the Smalley's has settled into a steady, dull but orderly routine, interrupted only by the sporadic outbursts of Tusker's childish tantrums. Lucy Smalley, probably for the first time in her married life, considers the prospect of her husband's death and her aloneness in a foreign country. Her constant nagging at Tusker for a statement of her financial prospects in the event of his death results in a touching, rough declaration of his affection for her - "You've been a good woman to me, Luce. Sorry I've not made it clear I think so." (p. 214) A fine touch at the end of the novel is the image of Lucy Smalley perched on one of the twin thrones in the bathroom drinking brandy and wrestling desperately with her grief over Tusker's death, focused on the empty seat next to her. The pathos of the scene, intermingled with the gentle comedy of the twin thrones, is characteristic of the entire novel which is a quiet conclusion to the epic layout of The Raj Quartet.

Another group of Anglo-Indians, to whom this term applies almost exclusively now as distinct from its reference to the British raj, are the Eurasians or people of mixed parentage, usually British and Indian, who are also a remnant of British rule in India. Stephen Alter, a young American writer born in India, deals with the problems of assimilation and identity faced by this class of Anglo-Indians in his novel Neglected Lives, published in 1978. His characters and setting are reminiscent of Scott's Staying On. Brigadier and Mrs. Augden, like the Smalleys, are in retirement in the hill station of Debrakot. It is a more desolate place than Pankot, extending its barrenness to the Augdens who are not only childless, but also

sterile in their emotional lives. The incursion of Lionel into their lives leads them to a recollection of their past years, now tinged with the bitterness and emptiness of their present life. The position of Eurasians in Indian society is a tenuous one as they are not accepted by the Indians, as Lionel soon finds out through his affair with a Hindu girl.

Neglected Lives is an interesting comment on the continuing effects of the British presence long after it had removed itself. The Anglo-Indians are not only unacceptable to Indians, but the former also took extraordinary pains to maintain an affiliation with the British and what they thought was British. Lionel's account of his mother is very revealing - "... my mother with her scent, her talcum powder and her gin and lime before dinner." It is noticeable that Lionel's view of his mixed heritage differs from that of his parent's or the Augden's view. Lionel, being a generation further removed from the Raj, did not encounter the kind of humiliation Augden experienced as a Eurasian in the British army. However, Lionel was brought up to hold himself aloof from the native Indian population. He confesses to Salim Ahmed that the city of Lucknow frightens him - "My mother had a small garden and that was where I grew up, sheltered from everything outside our walls."[11] When he is compelled to leave Lucknow over the affair of the Indian girl, he finds safety in Debrakot, which is to him a large garden enclosed by the protecting hills. The hill station does not become a dead-end to him as it obviously is to the Eurasians already there. Instead, Lionel's advent into Debrakot signifies the coming of new life which is highlighted by his marriage to Sylvia. The new road being built linking Debrakot with the outside world symbolizes the renewal of a town and people whose inbreeding threatened to end in

sterility and decay.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala as a western writer living in India finds herself in the unusual position of enjoying a "dual point of view of the outsider within."[12] Her writings produced over a period of about twenty years, may be divided into two sections on the basis of which they are used in the two chapters of this paper. Her early novels have been more or less domestic, dealing with Indian society and the Indian family almost exclusively. In her second plase which is relevant to this chapter, Jhabvala has tended to concentrate on the situation of the European in an Indian context. She explains this new direction in her writing as an "attempt to chart this uncharted territory for myself", the territory being her position "not quite as an insider but.....not entirely an outsider either." (Ibid) In all her novels, local and otherwise, Jhabvala plunges into the midst of an India that is still manifesting signs of its colonial past, striving to cope with the demands of the latter half of the twentieth century as well as its ancient cultural heritage.

Travellers published in 1973 is a novel made up of many short stories interwoven together, each story focusing on one or on a couple of individuals. The book has three main settings, Delhi, The Holy City and Manpur, around which it is built. The three sections are also divided into chapters each headed with the names of the character or characters who figure most prominently in them. The effect of this technique is a work that appears fragmented, conveying a sense of the constant shifts in background and setting as the characters move from one locale to another, forming and reforming in new combinations with other characters. This, Jhabvala seems to say, is India where the foreigner and native alike are always travelling and always searching.

The two main European characters in Travellers are Lee, an English girl in search of a guru, and Raymond also English, who has chosen to live in India for a year to 'experiment' with himself. In the course of her search Lee meets the Swamiji, and Raymond makes friends with Gopi who introduces him to Indian life. The world of Jhabvala's novels is a far cry from the atmosphere of The Raj Quartet or even the post-colonial Anglo-Indian world. A steady thread maybe traced of the evolution of characters in this field of English fiction, from the British colonists with their larger than life vision of themselves, to the English visitors in search of spiritual and cultural sustenance in the sixties and seventies.

The figure of Lee is a familiar sight in contemporary India. Jhabvala, in Lee and Margaret, explores this type of youthful westerner who heads east in search of 'spiritual enlightenment.' In their journey to India both girls are joined to the long strand of Adelas, Sarahs and Daphnes, but sharing few similiarities with them apart from a common British heritage. Lee, in her spiritual quest is closer to the lama in Kipling's Kim with the exception that at the age of twenty Lee does not know what she is seeking. Margaret has her own explanation of India's role in the modern world - "... people just don't come anymore to India to do good; those days are over. What they come for now is to do good to themselves, to learn, to take from India."[13] Needless to say, Margaret does good to herself by contracting hepatitis. She kills herself in the end as she refuses medical aid, putting faith only in the Swamiji's mantras. Lee, who appears somewhat more intelligent than Margaret, at first rejects the Swamiji but ultimately succumbs to his megalomania which he exerts through a combination of hypnotism and sexuality. The Swamiji is certainly a far cry from Professor Godbole who preached universal love in A Passage to India.

Jhabvala's indictment applies equally to both parties, Indian and English; the corrupt 'holy man' peddles his clever quibbles to a group of gullible westerners, driven to him by an inner emptiness, who are made easy dupes by their ignorance of Indian religious practice.

The relationship between Raymond and Gopi is slightly more satisfactory. They are reminiscent, in their friendship, of Fielding and Aziz in A Passage to India, with the exception of the obviously sexual attraction felt by Raymond towards Gopi. Though there are strong echoes of Aziz's playfulness and charm in Gopi the friendship in Travellers is debased by Gopi's immaturity and selfishness, although these are for the most part unconsciously manifested. He walks in and out of Raymond's flat and quarrels violently with his servant, not giving a thought to Raymond's convenience. Raymond, though he is a pleasant, sensitive man, is too cautious about losing Gopi's friendship - "Raymond was shaking. He was tremendously upset. He didn't know what to do. He felt like imploring Gopi, even getting down on his knees to do so or indulging in some other extravagant gesture." (p. 241) Such a desire from the reserved Raymond is rather pitiful, particularly when Gopi heartlessly assigns their parting to fate - "My fate. Your fate? We meet and then we part." (p. 240) It is as if the earth is still crying in a thousand voices "No, not yet" and that Fielding's cry for friendship is still being refused half a century later.

The other Indian characters do not fare much better at the hands of Jhabvala. Asha has placed herself outside the pale of traditional society and lives on her own in a Bombay high-rise apartment. She exemplifies the westernised Indian who has, in the process of westernisation, become displaced. Thus she is neurotic, lonely and obviously fearing menopause as seen in her affair with Gopi. Her frequent companion is Bulbul the servant

who is a truly wonderful creation and one of Jhabvala's most comic characters. Asha's periodic refuge is the holy city where Banubai, the other 'saintly' figure in the novel, resides. Banubai is a puzzling character, for while she certainly lacks the air of corruption and degeneracy of Swamiji there is something vaguely suspicious about her brand of spirituality. Raymond notices the fact that her manner of looking at people resembled the Swamiji's. In the confused mystical atmosphere of the holy city only Raymond appears to have a sane if rather embarrassed perspective.

Travellers on the whole is a lively and vivid picture of the west attempting to interact with the east. However, there is a strain of debasement, both commercial and spiritual, running through the Indian characters. There is a conspicuous absence of Indians like Aziz and Hamidullah who extol Persian poetry and mourn, pleasurably, the transience of life. Gopi, although he shares Aziz's erratic and temperamental tendencies, appears quite shallow by comparison. On the British side, there are no barriers forcibly erected between people as in Scott's novels. Sexual taboos have broken down - Adela's hysterical charge of rape would appear ridiculous in the world of Travellers. But, despite the freedom of social exchange, Raymond has obtained very little that is meaningful or lasting in terms of friendship from Gopi. Instead, it becomes very clear at the end that the basic disparity between their ways of thinking and feeling are in themselves barriers. In the case of the girls and Swamiji, the situation is even more hopeless. Margaret's interpretation of the function of India is equal in its ignorance to the prejudices and preconceptions with which the English girls, imported as wives for the colonial administrators, descended on India during the raj. But, whereas the Raj ignored what it could not or did not wish to understand, the new class of visitors to India

suffer grave consequences. Margaret, for instance, loses her life without even realizing that she has not understood anything.

Jhabvala in her other major novel Heat and Dust, published in 1975, attempts to analyse, through her 'heroine', the modern western fascination with the east and India in particular. The narrator, whose name is unrevealed, has come out to India for two reasons. The first concerns her step-grandmother who had run away with a Nawab half a century earlier and whose story she wishes to investigate. Her second reason is based on a genuine interest in India, particularly as it was the country Olivia chose to remain in for the rest of her life. In pursuing Olivia's history the author finds herself re-enacting it, sometimes coincidentally and sometimes deliberately.

Talking to Inderlal, who is her landlord and with whom she becomes involved as Olivia did with the Nawab, about her visit to India she says, "even if we have no particular attraction towards the spiritual message of the East, we come here in the hope of finding a simpler and more natural way of life."[14] Not everyone succeeds. There is the case of Chid who had to abandon his attempts to become a Hindu saddhu through a combination of dysentery and lack of conviction. Dr. Gopal tells the narrator that the physiological composition of the white person is not suited to the climate. She wonders, with some insight, if "the doctor's strictures apply to the European soul as well as our bodies." (p. 159) Thus, the author's re-enactment of Olivia's story takes on a new light in her anxiety to stay on in India. If she faithfully emulated Olivia in her actions perhaps it would necessarily follow that she would end up staying in India forever. Her sexual relations with Inderlal, in the same setting as Olivia and the Nawab's, could be seen as an attempt to unite herself with India. There is also Major

Minnie's warning that there are many things to love in India but they are all "dangerous for the European who allows himself to love too much." He believed that Olivia was destroyed by this strange element in the Indian experience which finds out the weak spot in the European and debilitates him. If this is so, then the narrator would seem to be plunging headlong to her destruction by following Olivia's trail.

The turning point in the novel occurs when, for the first time, the narrator deliberately diverges from Olivia's story. She decides to have the baby instead of going through an abortion as Olivia did. The narrator's decision may have been unconsciously or consciously linked to a wish to avoid the decline which set into the Nawab's family. Olivia's retreat into the mountains and the Nawab's decline into impecuniosity and obesity make their years of youthful vigour and romance appear a misty dream. Even worse is the narrator's visit to the Nawab's nephew and heir in his Knightsbridge flat. Surrounded by the mementos and relics of the past, Karim and his wife Kitty spend their time reminiscing about their faded glory and the country they would like to serve "if it had not been for the intransigeant attitude of the present government." (p. 98) The narrators pregnancy is thus an insurance, even a charm, against such grandiose decay. The midwife is seen as an almost supernatural figure who uses strange powers "not to terminate my pregnancy but to make sure of it." (p. 173) The narrator's decision to go up into the mountains where Olivia had retired has an added significance in its upward movement - "I assured her that I was not running away but on the contrary was going further, up into the mountains." (p. 173) While waiting for her baby she seems to be approaching some kind of spiritual upliftment. Up in the mountains the continuous rains have cut off her view of the peaks and she imagines visions of "mountain peaks higher than

any I've dreamed of; the snow on them is also whiter than all the other snow-so white it is luminous and shines against a sky which is of a deeper blue than any yet known to me. This is what I expect to see." (p.180)

At the conclusion of Heat and Dust, the narrator has found a personal vision which she came to India in the hope of. With the help of the long dead Olivia and her story and a new life awakening within her, she will live up in the mountains studying with the swamis the ancient writings "that had their birth up in the heighest heights of these mountains I cannot see." Her spiritual journey is symbolized by her movement from the heat and dust of the plains to the coolness and wetness of the mountains. The double thread of Olivia's story and that of the narrator's appear to intertwine in this final resolution. But Jhabvala, not the narrator, leaves vague and unclear what exactly happened to Olivia in her isolation. Likewise, the narrator's vision is rapturous but it is not revealed in the novel. The mountains she imagines have yet to be uncovered by the mists. There is a hint of doubt - what if Olivia had not enjoyed a "view - or vision that filled her eyes all those years and suffused her soul." (Ibid) as the narrator believes she might have. In the concluding sentence of the novel there is another hint of uncertainty, this time from the narrator herself - "In any case, it (her stay) will have to be sometime because of my condition which will make it more and more difficult to get down again, even if I should want to." (p. 181) There is an implicit sense of being trapped up in the snow and mists, of not being able to go back even if her vision does not prove to be as fulfilling as her imagining of it.

All of Jhabvala's western characters arrive in India from a seemingly empty landscape in search of the unknown. Her vision in Travellers and Heat and Dust is bleak. Even if these seekers are unsure of their goals,

what they are provided with by India is not salutory either. The corruption of Swamiji, the frivolous beauty of Gopi and the petty worries of Inder Lal are not complimentary to the Indian national character. Jhabvala's vision in these later novels is one of decay in both English and Indian spheres, each absorbing from the other only a confused brand of spirituality and commercialism.

V. S. Naipaul occupies a special position among the westerners writing on India in this chapter. His western outlook as a native Trinidadian is diversified by his Indian ancestry and Hindu upbringing. His book An Area of Darkness, published in 1964, is the only piece of non fiction to be used in this section. The book contains Naipaul's impressions of India during his first visit to the country, the "area of darkness", as he had visualized it in his childhood, from which his grandfather had emerged to settle in Trinidad. Naipaul's vision of India is complicated by his background. Removed from India by two generations he is able to view it as objectively as any Westerner might on first setting foot in India. On the other hand, the image of India has hovered over his family background in many subtle ways. Naipaul also brings to India his 'colonial' background and a familiarity with the British Empire which, however, is challenged by its manifestation in India. His approach to contemporary India and its civilization combines a historical and cultural thesis supported and confirmed by his first hand experiences in the country.

One of the most important sections of An Area of Darkness is an essay entitled "Fantasy and Ruins" at the beginning of the third part of the book. In it Naipaul analyses with a great deal of truth the essence of British imperialism in India and its effect on themselves and on the evolution of Indian culture and society. Many of his views are supported by the liter-

ary works of the British and Indian writers in this essay. One of his most interesting observations on the Raj is their concept of themselves - "Their grounds were a little too spacious, their ceilings a little too high, their columns and arches and pediments a little too rhetorical; they were neither of England nor India; they were a little too grand for their purpose, too grand for the puniness, poverty and defeat in which they were set. They were appropriate to a conception of endeavour rather than to endeavour."[15] One is reminded of the collector's wife in A Passage to India who places herself and all other British above the Indians, with the exception of a few Rani's with whom they are equal. Such superiority was automatically assumed by most Anglo-Indians upon crossing the seas to their colonial outposts. Naipaul also remarks on the importance of the club to the British rulers of which Forster and Scott have given us a great deal of proof in their novels. He views the significance of the British presence in India in a historical perspective, accurately defining the nature of its influence both direct, as during the Raj, and indirect as in its after effects subsequent to their withdrawal from India. The British ruled India, says Naipaul, as foreigners. Unlike the Moghuls they did not become part of it but "in the end they escaped back to England." (p. 212) He is brutal almost in his view of what the British left behind them as an inheritance for India. "They left no noble monuments behind and no religion save a concept of Englishness as a desirable code of behaviour... which in Indian minds can be dissociated from the fact of Indian rule, the vulgarities of racial arrogance or the position of England today." (Ibid) In Naipaul's overall assessment of British imperialism in India he sees the British indulging in a "work of national art" creating a fantasy in which the concept of their own Englishness was so pervasive that it was taken

over by the Indians.

Turning to the Indian civilization itself, Naipaul characterizes it in two ways; its condition when the British encountered it and the direction it was forced to take after this encounter. British imperialism took over India because in the eighteenth century the latter civilization was in a state of decline, being a conjunction of "static Islam and decadent Hinduism." The British also succeeded in conquering India because it was in the very nature of the country "to meet its conquerors halfway." India had always survived its invasions because of its ability to absorb the conqueror. The deviation from this pattern came with the British who were so armed with this idea of their 'British'ness that this absorption did not take place. The British merely withdrew. In Naipaul's view, the interesting and perhaps tragic thing about this encounter was that the Indians tried to deal with the British as they did with their other conquerors. The unhappy result was "an immense self-violation." Unable to absorb the 'Englishness' of the English. The Indians were forced instead to "step out of themselves" and view themselves in the light of the conqueror, measuring themselves by his standards. Hence the advent of Indian nationalism. This nationalist movement, by viewing Indian history and its heritage self-consciously, has broken off its continuity with the past. Elsewhere in the book Naipaul notes that the medieval mind of India had no sense of history or true sense of beauty. Thus, it necessarily followed that they also lacked the spirit of assessment, of realizing loss, and in this they were secure. Modern India, on the contrary, is forced to consciously possess its culture and religion, doing so with the aid of western disciplines and western thinkers.

Naipaul's assessment of the crisis of post-colonial India thus con-

cludes that it is a nation which has become displaced through its search for an identity. In the very act of searching they have lost its spirit and with it "The old world, of ruins which spoke only of continuity and of creation as an elemental repetition..." (p. 224) His vision is bleak and often cruel but its truth is evident in the novels of the next chapter in which the Indian writers expose their own confusion and loss of identity. Naipaul, in another book India: A Wounded Civilization written over ten years later, repeats his observation on the Indian civilization in decay. But in his conclusion he states that "... in the present uncertainty and emptiness there is the possibility of a true new beginning, of the emergence in India of mind, after the long spiritual night."[16] Naipaul's vision of India is of a country which has reached the nadir of its civilization, whose decay had already set in before but was hastened by its encounter with a totally new kind of conquering race which withdrew to leave India floundering. An Area of Darkness is indeed a great distance away from Kipling's Kim. In between lies a whole history of the collision between two civilizations as viewed by the western half of this encounter.

Chapter II - India: A Self-Portrait

It seems appropriate to begin this chapter with an account of the historical process of Indian civilization as viewed from within, just as the previous chapter was concluded with a similar account by an outside observer. Narad Chaudhuri, a Bengali scholar, published in 1951 The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, an exhaustive and often heavy going record of his childhood and growth to manhood in British India during the early years of this century. The author makes it clear, however, that the work is more historical than autobiographical - "The story I want to tell is the story of the struggle of a civilization with a hostile environment, in which the destiny of British rule in India became necessarily involved."[17] He describes this civilization through the details of his own life, tracing in minute detail all influences on his physical, moral, religious and intellectual being. The result is an amazing portrait of this "unknown Indian", whose education and intellect must be outstanding in educated Indian society. Chaudhuri himself is aware of his exceptional background. He acknowledges the impossibility of applying his portrait to the Indian population in general. Instead, he compares his position in Indian society to that of an aeroplane - "It can never rise so high as to be able to sever the terrestrial connection, but its flight helps it to obtain a better view of the lie of the land." (viii) As we discover by reading the book, the author always has his feet planted firmly in his Indian background and upbringing, but is able, through the unusual objectivity of his vision, to provide an insight into India which is certainly unique amongst Indian scholarship

which often tends to be blurred by nationalistic sentiment in the fields of history and literature.

Chaudhuri's dedication of his book "To the Memory of the British Empire in India" might at first glance appear to be the outpourings of a dedicated anglophile, an impression that would become increasingly confused as the reader wades through the book and discovers that Chaudhuri's acquaintance with the British in person is almost non-existent. Moreover, he makes no attempt to disguise a basic antipathy towards its members - "In general, I disliked and despised the local English. To my mind they alone justified the gibe that the English were a nation of shop-keepers." (p. 370) The actual explanation of this intriguing dedication, described by Naipaul as "mock-imperial", is provided at the conclusion of the autobiography where we understand why Chaudhuri could with equanimity state that "... all that was good and living within us was made, shaped and quickened by the same British rule."

One of the most interesting chapters in the book is the one entitled "An Essay on the Course of Indian History" which contains Chaudhuri's thesis on the course of Indian history. He sees its civilization in terms of a "ternary sequence", containing three cycles, each one connected with the three major invasions of the Indian sub-continent by the Aryans, Moghuls and lastly the British. For the purposes of this chapter the last cycle is the most relevant, but it must be noted that the overall picture of Indian civilization is coloured by its close association with great historical movements originating elsewhere - "The greatest paradox connected with India is that for a country geographically so well marked from the rest of the world and so self-contained, its history is inextricably woven with the strands of universal history." (p. 473) The cultural implications of

these cycles is that India has absorbed the religions, customs and even the language of its invaders. Hence the great periods of Indian literature belong to the periods following the Aryan and Moghul invasions when Sanskrit and Persian flourished respectively.

Thus, in the third cycle following upon the British colonization of India, Chaudhuri emphasizes the "essentially foreign character of modern Indian culture." Compared with the other cycles however, the British or European cycle is culturally the most debased - "... what one sees in India today is an immense expanse of debased Europeanization, mottled here and there with Hindu or Muslim traits." (p. 497) Chaudhuri resembles Naipaul in his opinion of the incomplete synthesis of east and west which has contributed to this cultural deterioration. Indian civilization had reached its peak during the Sanskrit period and had continued in a downward trend until, with the advent of the British, it was incapable of anymore cultural assimilation, lapsing instead into a purely imitative stage, "creating an Indian version of European civilization in our own interest, for our private use, and in order to keep ourselves within the pale of civilized life." (p. 508) Chaudhuri sees Britain and its Empire in a state of decline through internal causes. However he also attributes their withdrawal from India to the Indo-Gangetic plain "which so irresistibly draws civilizations to it, and strangles them irresistibly..." Thus all the foreign invaders of India have either succumbed to its vampirish tendencies or withdrawn from it as did Britain.

Chaudhuri's resolution to this crisis of a decaying civilization is that India should once more look elsewhere for rejuvenation - "... only through a renewed affiliation with the countries which stand in the mainstream of human evolution can we hope to live." (p. 510) The uniqueness

of the Indian sub-continent has been its ability to be included within larger historical and cultural movements three times. Chaudhuri has hope that such a "miracle of history" could repeat itself and he looks to Europe and to America as sources of sustenance. Chaudhuri's own position within this culture of debasement is interesting. He reconciles his Indian background with his western thought and education in two ways. One, he is proud of the fact that "I have not uprooted myself from the native soil by sojourn in a foreign country or by foreign schooling; I have only to look within myself and contemplate my life to discover India;" (p. 470) the other is his acceptance of colonial India as a part of India's historical process. As he says in his Preface, the involvement of Britain's destiny with India's was necessary, and throughout the Autobiography he maintains a position of concession to British cultural and political influence while remaining a firmly oriental Bengali gentleman. His hostility towards the British race stems only from their supercilious denial "of every capability and every quality in us..." (p. 512) and is more an intellectual rather than a personal resentment.

We move from Chaudhuri's Toynbeesque interpretation to the first work of fiction in this chapter. Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi which also postulates a theory of decay and regeneration, is centered around the city of Delhi, soon to give way to the new city built outside its walls by the British. In the author's introduction to the novel, first published in 1940, he states that "My purpose was to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes. Seldom is one allowed to see a pageant of History whirl past and partake in it too."[18] Ali attempts to convey not only the historical course of the ancient city of Delhi, but

through it illustrates the philosophical maxim that "the whole wide world is in a state of constant flux and transformation, and life must obey the law of variation and change."

There is a kind of poetic splendour with which the author treats his subject. The novel opens with a description of night enveloping the city. There is a description of the ancient glories of Delhi after which the writer provides a view of the home of Mir Nihal, whose fortunes serve as the focus of Twilight in Delhi, a microcosmic reflection of the fate of Delhi itself. The novel is well structured, with its conclusion mirroring the nightfall at the beginning. In between, Mir Nihal and his family experience many vicissitudes of fortune while the city remains immutable within its cycle of past glories and present decay - "... forts and tombs and monuments, remnants and reminders of old Delhis, holding onto life with a tenacity and purpose which is beyond comprehension and belief." (p. 2) Ahmed Ali is particularly good at depicting the daily life and activities of his Muslim environment. Hence the value of such writing in English which provides a view from within of Indian society with a clarity and accuracy made possible only by the background of these writers.

Twilight in Delhi portrays the lives and affairs of two generations which in Indian fashion are closely intertwined. Mir Nihal is the chief figure of the older generation. In the early part of the novel he is shown as a successful Muslim householder, the head of a large and prosperous family. He indulges in such 'Delhian' hobbies as flying expensive pigeons and keeping company with the intelligent and beautiful courtesan Babban Jan. The first blow to his well-being is struck with her death. The loss of his pigeons, his quarrel with the wife of his favourite brother and the culminating blow of a crippling stroke follow one upon the other. In the end

Mir Nihal, once described as noble and majestic, is reduced to helpless inactivity, not even caring about his servant's neglect of himself.

Asghar, Mir Nihal's son, parallels him within the younger generation. We first see him as a love-lorn young man who spends most of his time dreaming about Bilqeece whom he finally marries. The wedding, with its lengthy, bustling preparations, appears as a symbol of the renewal of life, taking place after Mir Nihal's loss of Babban Jan. However, it is only a brief respite as Asghar's ardent love for Bilqeece wanes and the marriage deteriorates until her death. Bilqeece's death also occurs at a time when general chaos reigns in India and the rest of the world, with native rebellions and epidemics on the one hand and the First World War on the other. Asghar's attempts to remarry prove futile and we last see him a disappointed and disillusioned man. The novel concludes with the death of his brother Habibbudin. The older generation suffers its own decline and is also forced to witness the untimely deaths of its offspring.

The city of Delhi, which Ahmed Ali portrays so well, seems to have an existence of its own. It lies like a "beaten dog" which has "curled its tail between its legs, and lies lifeless in the night as an acknowledgment of defeat." (p. 4) There is not only physical deprivation in its bustling, filthy streets but also a moral and cultural degeneration. In the description of the Coronation festivities Mir Nihal is seen outraged by the people's adulation of their rulers, although Ali lapses here, as he does occasionally, into a florid declamatory style which suggests affectation rather than sincerity - "... but soon, when they (children) have grown up Time will show them a new and quite a different sight, a peep into the mysteries of life, and a full glimpse of the sorrows of subjection." (p. 152) The novel is prevented from being totally negative by

the author's reiteration that "life remained over which men had no command and must go on." (p. 288) If Delhi has been built and destroyed seven times already, surely it will rise once more when its people have regained their lost "pride and grandeur under a foreign yoke." (p. 2)

Twilight in Delhi is what one might call a patriotic novel but its patriotism is not a heavy handed indictment of foreign rule but a romanticized view of India's past in which its triumph as well as its failures are jointly lauded. This attitude, with its tinge of romanticism bordering on sentimentality, is characteristic of Kamala Markandaya's novel Nectar in a Sieve which attained wide popularity in America. Indian writers like Markandaya and Mulk Raj Anand have moved to the villages and the lower stratae of society in an attempt to depict Indian life from below. That they do not completely succeed in their efforts stems from an insufficient understanding of their subjects. However, they are worth considering for the attempts made.

Nectar in a Sieve is similar in many ways to Woolf's The Village in the Jungle in its theme of the denudation of rural life by the forces of industrialization and "progress." The advent of the leather tannery into the idyllic village life of the narrator, an ordinary peasant woman, creates disharmony and ultimately tragedy in the village which is forced to succumb. In chosing to focus on a rural setting, Markandaya does provide a vivid picture of the continuous cycle of the agricultural way of life with its plentiful harvests and tragic famines. The novel does not ultimately succeed in being wholly convincing chiefly due to its method of narration. The identity of the author often becomes confused with Rukmani the peasant woman who narrates the story. For instance, in Rukmani's soliloquies and philosophisings there is present more than just a hint of urbanity and

sophistication, quite incongruous with the personality of a simple villager. Often the language of the narrator is too contrived in its combination of elevated simplicity and self-conscious sensibility - "With each tender seedling that unfurled its small green leaf to my eager gaze, my excitement would rise and mount, winged wondrous."[19]

The success of Nectar in a Sieve in the west is due mainly to the depiction of rural Indian life, a novelty to western audiences. Like Mulk Raj Anand's Coolie, it provides a descriptive and colourful account of strange and exotic settings. A review of Nectar in a Sieve states that it is "the very first novel written powerfully from the inside about East Indian working people. This fact in itself makes the book notable..." The fascinated response of this American reviewer does not take into account the incongruity of having such a story related by a peasant woman in the manner criticised above. By comparison, Leonard Woolf's novel appears even more remarkable in his obviously instinctive grasp of the essence of rural life in Ceylon.

Mulk Raj Anand's Coolie, published a few years before Nectar in a Sieve, deals with the coolies or untouchables, the lowliest class in the complicated Indian social scale. It is a 'social' novel in that Anand attempts to underline the misery and deprivation suffered by the underdog, here represented by Munoo. However, Coolie borders on the sentimental in its vindication of the poor. It might have succeeded better if the author had not tried so hard to emphasize the destitution of Munoo's class. In fact, all through the novel Anand seems to luxuriate in his lengthy descriptions of the filth and squalor Munoo lives in, in particular during his employment as a factory worker. In his diatribe against industrialization and its inhuman use of men and women Anand is reminiscent of Dickens. But one

tends to get rather tired of the hopelessness of Munoo's situation instead of being alarmed or shocked by it. V. S. Naipaul in India: A Wounded Civilization remarks on the "old sentimental abstractions about the poverty of India..." Anand's novel contains more than just a strain of this clichetic attitude. Munoo's death from tuberculosis at the end comes almost as a relief, particularly as the novel begins to fall apart just before his employment by Mrs. Mainwaring. His rescue by the Mem Sahib is too implausible. One can hardly believe that she would pick up an unconscious coolie lying in the middle of the road, nurse him back to health and then incline towards his attractive masculinity. Coolie is an echo of Kiplings Kim in its account of the adventures of a young boy and his progress to manhood. However, Anand is unable to provide a fitting conclusion to his novel which gives the reader the feeling of having run out of breath. Munoo expires in a pathetic way, leaving a life which held no hope for him - "But in the early hours of one unreal, white night he passed away - the tide of his life having reached back to the deeps."[10] It is no wonder that one remains unmoved.

A major reason for the inability of these two writers to write effectively and convincingly on villagers and coolies has to do with their backgrounds. The fact that they write fluently in English indicates a fair if not high, degree of westernization which places them socially and economically in a postion from which it is difficult to grasp the essence of the worlds they try to capture in their fiction. This explanation would also hold good for their lack of vision and imagination which might have over-reached the strong social and communal barriers.

Markandaya is able to provide a more authentic background in Some Inner Fury for instance, which deals with upper-class Indian society during

the years leading up to the Declaration of Independence in 1947. These were momentous times in Indian history. We have already seen the British side of it in Paul Scott's Raj Quartet. In Indo-Anglian literature there were a spate of novels which came out in the fifties which bear the inexorable stamp of the social and political adjustments forced upon Indian society, in particular with regard to the upper classes which were in close contact with the British. A noticeable fact about these novels is that the great majority of them were written by women. Not only does this throw light on the nature of Indian society but it also means that these novels tend to deal with the question of women and their roles in society. In the Indian context this ensures a close view of the issues of marriage and the family with regard to women.

Markandaya's novel Some Inner Fury, published in 1956, provides the most trivial treatment amongst all these writers of this theme of women in marriage and society. It concerns the romantic relationship between an Indian girl Mira and her English lover Richard. The novel is worth mentioning only because the issue is relevant as being yet another complication arising out of the British-Indian encounter. The question of inter-racial relationships was one of the major themes of Paul Scott's tetralogy where the 'Manners case' was dealt with in a very sensitive manner. Markandaya's Some Inner Fury begins promisingly enough but lapses into a silly romanticism with the start of Mira's and Richard's affair. The novel is at its most bathetic in the incredible tramp around India which the two lovers indulge in. This irresponsible and implausible writing is worsened by the background of nationalist agitation which, instead of adding credibility to the story, adds a melodramatic element to the story. For instance, the climax of the novel occurs in a scene replete with a fire, murder and

general hysteria in the village where Mira's sister-in-law was involved in social work. At this point Mira has to cope with an insane missionary, a demented lover, a jealous husband and an orphan child. In the end she is parted from her English lover by the onrush of nationalist riots and general chaos. It is meant to be a poignant, heart-breaking separation not just of two people but of two cultures doomed to be apart. Mira is left to muse in a philosophic vein - "But what matter to the universe, I said to myself, if now and then a world is born or a star should die; or what matter to the world, if here and there a man should fall, or a head or a heart should break? What matter indeed!

If Markandaya was preoccupied with the romantic aspect of British-Indian encounters, Nayantara Sahgal in her novel A Time to be Happy is concerned with the more profound issue of the Anglicized Indian in the changing society of Pre- and Post-Independent India. He occupied a position in the social and political hierarchy of British India which was complex and often confusing, more so after Independence when he found himself heir to the British way of life in India. A Time to be Happy is related by a nameless narrator who identifies himself as a 'rebel', involved in the nationalist movement. To the narrator, this movement is less a political than a social organization through which he "would help to alleviate the awe-inspiring distress of the poor of our land."[21] The narrator's activities in this movement provide one locale in which the novel is set, that of the villages in which social work is being carried out and such Gandhian activities as spinning and sojourns in jail.

The actual focus of the novel is not on the narrator but on young Sanad, the promising but profoundly disturbed son of Govind Narayan, a wealthy patrician "still living in the era of the Nawabs." Sanad and his

brother Girish have been brought up on the English model, acquiring "the veneer and the gloss that had made them nearly English" (p. 4) with a view to prepare them for high positions in the British mercantile sector. With the rise of Indian nationalism and the imminent departure of the British however, this careful grooming has begun to look unnecessary and out of place. The narrator was in no doubt of this incongruity and had already made his choice by surrendering his family inheritance to the nationalist movement. At the other extreme there are Indians such as Girish and Govind Narayan's brother Harish, who have completely identified their social and political stance with that of their rulers. Caught in-between these extremes is Sanad who as a young man finds himself incapable of being reconciled to this image - "It occurred to him ... that his parents had gone to a great deal of trouble and expense moulding him to be a figure that would never have any reality." (p. 125)

Sanad's incursion into Anglo-Indian society, through his employment in the firm of Selkirke and Lowe, first alerts him to his position as a misfit in both Indian and British societies. There is in him an echo of Hari Kumar from Scott's The Raj Quartet, although he is neither as tragic a figure as Kumar nor ludicrous as Harilal who is so obsessed by his dark skin that he attempts to lighten it with creams and lotions. Sanad's assessment of the Anglicized Indian is strongly reminiscent of both Chaudhuri and Naipaul - "What we call society and model on the West isn't really the same thing as European society at all. In the West ... it stems from their own culture and isn't an imitation of someone else's." (p. 95) As he is drawn closer into the social structure of Anglo-Indian society, his attempts to break out of his image as an English-educated Indian are admirable. He refuses a post in Calcutta and the opportunity to go abroad,

as he wishes to "discover my country a little." His insistence on being paid the same salaries as his British contemporaries and his adoption of spinning are brave gestures in the face of Selkirk and Lowe.

Sanad's many confrontations with his English employers partly confutes Naipaul's statement in An Area of Darkness that the Indians were "forced into a nationalism which in the beginning was like a mimicry of the British" (p. 223) Certainly Sanad's attempts to justify his "stepping in tune with recent trends in this country" are of no avail against the confidence and complacence of men like Weatherby and McIvor whose treatment of him as a confused adolescent deflates his enthusiasm. As Naipaul states, the British are forcing their image on the Indian. Mr. Trent assures Sanad that "You've had a sound education, ... a British education, if I may say so. You've had six years with the firm. You won't go far wrong." (p. 172) But Sanad's awareness of his nationality or rather the confusion over his identity has arisen from his confrontation with the British after he has been made into a copy after their image. Thus, Sanad's consciousness of being caught "midway between two worlds, not completely belonging to either" is seized upon by the narrator who suggests that his very duality is his insurance for survival in a divided world. - "The more elements that combine to make us, the more integrated we shall be as human beings..."(p. 234) Although Sanad hotly rejects this view, at the end of the novel he is unaffected by any real worries or uncertainties about his conflicts with the British, to the surprise of the narrator. For the first time in the novel, the narrator is left behind by Sanad's youthful confidence and his superior understanding of the English and their way of thinking. Perhaps the future of independent India lay in the hands of men like Sanad who, brought up in the English fashion, step into their shoes, directing English firms and

monopolizing the formerly exclusive English clubs.

Although the question of women is secondary to the issue of Sanad's progress to self-hood, there are clearly drawn portraits of various levels of Indian womenhood which not only recur in the novels to follow but are also the main preoccupation of some of them. The most interesting of Sahgal's women is Maya the wife of Harish. Unlike her anglophilic husband, Maya enjoys little familiarity with western ways and so is unable to participate in most of his activities. Their marriage has become "a sterile, if exotic, bloom..." and she turns to social service as an escape from its emptiness. Her action elevates her to an almost spiritual purity in the eyes of the narrator, who is attracted to her for the first time by her acts of personal deprivation when she discards her conventional, rich garments for "... a plain saree of nondescript colour, and her very lack of ornaments and embellishments made me realize that I had never looked at her closely before." (p. 65) There is another type of female social worker in Kunti Behen, a complete contrast to Maya's cool beauty. She is strident, forceful and to fa~~l~~lly unfeminine, although very dedicated to her work. Her figure, almost a caricature, also recurs in other Indian novels. Ernest, socially conscious but comically unattractive, these women are always juxtaposed with a more feminine version of Indian womanhood. If Maya represents the simplicity and purity of the Hindu woman, Kusum, the wife of Sanad, is an example of innocence and purity spoiled by western ways. Maya had retained these qualities throughout her marriage, refusing to step out of her orthodox upbringing. Kusum ironically, since her husband is all the time grappling with his 'English' upbringing, conforms to the image of a sophisticated 'modern' socialite complete with "valiant cock-tail drinking and high heels." The diversity in Sahgal's presentation of Indian women

must surely be a reflection of their increasing prominence, if not presence, in Indian society. If so, they have come a long way from the shy ladies who giggled behind the hedges at the Collector's garden party in A Passage to India.

Santa Rama Rau's two novels Home to India and Remember the House deal specifically with the issue of women in the context of their bi-cultural heritage and in terms of love and marriage. The narrator in both novels has been educated in England, not merely in imitation of the British, as Sanad had been, in India. Home to India published in 1944 poses a different set of problems, as the narrator wishes to maintain her foreign upbringing while attempting to reabsorb India - "I wanted to be a 'real' Indian, but I wanted to be a "real" Indian with a European upbringing."[22] During the course of the novel, which is autobiographical, we see the narrator and her sister Premila attempting to define themselves as Europeanized Indians. The author's first encounter in the book is with her grandmother whose first comment to her is "My dear child, where in India will we find a husband tall enough for you?" (p. 1) The strictly conservative Hindu household of the author's grandparents provides an interesting and often amusing challenge to the two girls. The grandmother, for instance, feigns a deliberate ignorance of the British presence in India. The narrator is able to measure the progress of her "Indianization" by her grandmother who, upon their first arrival, had represented all that was India. After some months she realizes that her grandmother "was as much a stranger to her changing country as I was ... she could only cling rigidly to the old conventions and the framework of a dying society."

The intermediary between the sisters and India is their mother. Although she too has lived abroad for many years, she is anxious to fit into

the new Indian society beginning to emerge. The mother gives many lengthy dissertations on a variety of Indian subjects for the education of her daughters. The weakness of Home to India is the rather tiresomely repetitious desire of the narrator to become 'Indian' and to assimilate the 'real India'. It is almost as if she places herself under a microscope for a daily examination for any increase in her Indian identity. The work is obviously that of a young writer. Her mother too often resembles a spokesman for the Tourist Board of India, while many of the author's own conclusions on her country are amazingly facile and superficial. For instance "... in spite of the superficial differences of dress and custom, Indians are solidly united by reason of their nationality ... I feel reasonably certain that if the barriers of distance and physical communication could be broken down, India would be a nation ..." (p. 141) If only! The author, in attempting to establish her identity, has begun on the wrong foot. She is confined mainly to the world of Delhi cock-tail parties and a touristy apprehension of India. Nevertheless, for what it's worth, Home to India is an actual record of the conflicts and resolutions faced by the Europeanized Indian.

Rama Rau, in her second novel Remember the House, shifts the emphasis from a search for identity to the question of love and marriage. In particular the narrator considers the opposing worlds of the 'love' marraige represented by the American couple Nicky and Alix, and of the 'arranged' marriage which she enters into with Harish at the end of the novel. Initially, the narrator is fascinated if not sometimes embarrassed by the demonstrative affection between the two Americans who are obviously "in love", a state of being not too common in Indian marriages. The narrator is very much attracted by Alix's philosophy of life which, in true American

fashion, is to "have fun" and to be as happy as possible. Unfortunately, in India this philosophy is placed under severe strain, where even a badly pressed dress can ruin Alix's happiness for a while. Their marriage is also put to the test and despite their strongly asserted 'love' for each other, Nicky 'makes a pass' at the author which eventually leads to the dissolution of the friendship between her and the Americans. It is interesting that Rama Rau should have chosen Americans rather than Europeans to represent western society. It is surely a reflection of the changing influences in the western hemisphere and its effect on India, where Britain is growing steadily smaller and unimportant. In Home to India, however, Nicky and Alix with the exception of their close but brief contact with the author and her Indian friends, are as remote from the 'real India' within their group of Standard Oil executives as the British were. The narrator, decides without any regret, that her period of adventure with the Americans has ended. That she re-enters the traditional world of her family without a backward glance seems to be a rather definite statement by Rama Rau that the two worlds may cross each other but never merge.

On the side of arranged marriages, there are the friends of the narrator, Pria and Karan who, in a stolid, sensible fashion, embark upon a marriage in which there is no question of their being "in love." The unromanticism of their approach is further contrasted by juxtaposition with Nicky and Alix. At this point when Harish, who is expected by everyone to marry the narrator, proposes to her she rejects him on the grounds that "there should be more to life than just settling down." Her visit to South India to stay with her mother and grandmother for a while, proves to be the turning point for the author. The quiet purity of their lives, away

from the bustling political world of Bombay, is a comforting retreat reminiscent of her Jalnabad childhood in the joint household of her grandmother. The narrator's friendship with the young school teacher Krishnan, with whom she thinks she is in love and who leaves one day to marry a girl he had never seen, helps her to discover a whole new facet to marriage. Her grandmother, who rebukes her for talking about being in love like a westerner, is also instrumental in expanding the narrator's education in this matter. The older woman dismisses the concept of being in love as "A little excitement, a little impatience, much impatience." She also maintains that love is not necessary for a good marriage - "... devotion, yes, and children, and respect, and honor for a woman, but not love."[23] This piece of advice together with her grandmother's moving account of her own marriage leads the narrator to conclude that the Nichols with their "exoticism ... their strange approach to life, their unfamiliar concept of personal relationships" bear no relevance to her way of life. Needless to say, she accepts Hari on her return to Bombay.

An interesting fact, which does not materially affect our appreciation of Rama Rau's work, is that the author was married to an American at the time Remember the House was written. Her intriguing support for the conventional Indian marriage, as opposed to the 'love' marriage of the Americans, is paralleled by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala who, even though of foreign extraction, comes out in favour of 'arranged' marriages in her novels.

Rama Rau's conservative approach to marriage is echoed for the most part by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in her novel Amrita or To Whom She Will, published in 1955. Her early novels such as this one are concerned solely with domestic India into which her marriage to an Indian provided much insight. Together with this close tie with Indian society, her achievements

in this field of Indian writing in English is very striking. She has often been compared with Jane Austen in those of her novels dealing with the issues of marriage and the Indian woman.

Amrita adds another element to the issue of marriage, that of the growing conflict between parents and children. The conclusion of Amrita, where her choice of a husband happens to coincide with her mother's choice, proves Jhabvala's conservative approach, although for a while it did look as if Amrita would defy her family in a rather drastic manner. By a happy coincidence of everyone's wishes, the disaster is averted. Jhabvala's analysis of the conflicts between generations and amongst families over the question of marriage is sensitive and often humorous. The parents and families of the two unfortunate lovers are ranged in the camp of the match making older generation. Between them, the two families succeed, most subtly, in breaking up the relationship between their respective offspring. Amrita's mother Radha is a tiresome woman but she is treated more with a humorous tolerance than criticism. Likewise, Amrita's grandfather Pandit Ran Bahadur Saxena fulfills the conventional image of patriarchal tyranny in refusing to accept Hari. It is Vazir Dayal his son-in-law, and the only figure who encourages Amrita's affair with Hari in order to enjoy the discomfiture of his wife's relatives, who is Jhabvala's least favourite character.

The author's treatment of Amrita's and Hari's love affair is further proof of Jhabvala's inherent sympathy with the old system. It soon becomes obvious that both young people are more enchanted with the idea of love than with truly loving each other. There are several comic scenes in the radio station canteen where Amrita and Hari often meet. Amrita loves to watch Hari eat while he often forgets, in his enjoyment of the meal, that

she too deserves some attention. Their verbal love-making is then conducted inbetween Hari's mouthsful and constant interruptions by his friends. Unconsciously, Amrita is growing attached to Krishna Sengupta their 'paying guest' while Hari, inspite of fervent protestations to the contrary, allows himself to be inveigled by his family into marriage with Sushila. Jhabvala demonstrates, in a rather amusing fashion, the incapacity of the younger generation to choose for itself partly because the older generation is far too experienced and conniving in such matters to be matched by their offspring. As a concession to the latter, however, Jhabvala has Amrita's choice of Krishna coincide with her mother's. Krishna himself has fallen deeply in love with Amrita, so, unlike Rama Rau, Jhabvala does recognize the need for such an attachment but it is tempered by the approval of all concerned and does not possess the self-absorbing isolation of Markandaya's lovers. Even Hari is strongly attracted to his new bride whom he has seen but does not know at all - "... and though he still would not see her, hardly ever thought of her, he was suddenly so happy, he felt he had never been so happy in all his life."[24] Amrita thus describes two types of marriages, the traditional Hindu one and the more liberated marriage towards which Amrita is headed and which lies as a compromise between an arranged marriage and one in which free choice is exercised by both parties. It is interesting to note that Jhabvala herself is an outsider in terms of race, caste and religion in her own marriage and that she should vouch so strongly in favour marriage 'organized' by the family.

Jhabvala is still on the subject of women in her novel Get Ready For Battle published in 1962, but her focus has changed from the consideration of marriage to the question of the distribution of women's roles between duties to the family and to society in general. The main character in this

novel is Sarla Devi, the wife of Gulzari Lal, who now lives alone in Spartan simplicity having left her family in order to pursue her own goals in life, spiritual and otherwise. Most of her time is spent in actively working for the poor and dispossessed communities, who, very often, were the victims of large industrialists like her husband. Sarla Devi is a conglomeration of the various portraits of socially active women in these novels and she invokes an ambiguous response of admiration tempered with dislike in the reader. We admire her for the courage of her convictions which made her leave a comfortable life to try and help eliminate the "cruelty and wrong" in her society. There is an element of purity in her ascetism and her solitude. We last see her walking in the backstreets searching for the prostitute her brother had abandoned. Her life is a series of battles and conflicts in trying to follow her convictions - "... she had to engage - and then, perhaps, in the end, one day, when she had engaged enough, then she could be free."

The unpleasant side of Sarla Devi also stems from her dedication to her work and principles which sometimes appears inhuman. She fails in her duty as wife and mother, and in the Indian view of things is thus only half a woman. Most of her natural, womanly instincts are either dried up or suppressed in her. Gulzari Lal is one of the observers of this side of Sarla Devi which, unfortunately, seems to always reveal itself in his presence - "All this passion and fire of hers ... had been very well when she was young and beautiful, but now, when there was no beauty left, they struck him as merely grotesque."[25] Sarla Devi's position resembles that of the mother in Rama Rau's Remember the House who has also left her husband's household in Bombay to live in quiet simplicity in the south. Her existence is contrary to Sarla Devi's, however, in that the latter lives not only with an

alcoholic brother but is constantly striving for the welfare of others, often creating unpleasantness between her family and herself. Rama Rau's mother figure provides a haven of good sense and spirituality for her daughter. Her absence from Bombay is universally accepted as is her return to the side of her husband's sick-bed. One might say that both these novels provide an Indian version of the broken family with the women as the absconding partners. Their reasons for doing so are a mixture of spirituality and selflessness such as appeal to the Indian mentality which is unaffected by this division of marriage partners. This is certainly true of Rama Rau's novel although Jhabvala's vision is less placid.

This group of Indian women novelists are characterized by their awareness of the political and social exigencies from which they have emerged. The themes of misplaced identity together with their self-awareness as women proves to be the dominant concern of Indian writing in English during this period. By comparison, the novels of R. K. Narayan provide a refreshing change from the preceding works. Described as the father of the regional novel in India, Narayan isolates himself from the troubled concerns of cross-cultural exchange. The world of his novels is centered around the township of Malgudi and its environs in South India. In terms of artistic capability Narayan is probably the most competent of all the Indo-Anglian writers discussed so far. His portrayal of middle, lower middle class Malgudi society is successful because it is so convincing. His characters are drawn with firm, sure strokes and he never gets out of his depth in describing petty financiers, pseudo-mystics or small-time film makers, unlike Markandaya or Anand who were obviously unfamiliar with their subjects. Narayan's novels work so well because of the solidity and safety of the world in which they are set, this being part of his 'provincialism.'

V. S. Naipaul in India: A Wounded Civilization notes the absence of a larger world view than the south Indian state in which Malgudi is placed. In Waiting for the Mahatma Narayan does incorporate the nationalist movement, but we only stumble upon it by accident, as does the 'hero', Srinivas. Naipaul also quotes Narayan as having said that "India will go on." This sense of continuity with the past and into the future, unconsciously present and thus more pervasive, is another element in Narayan's vision which distinguishes him from the other writers.

Narayan's novels are essentially comedies. His characters are armed with an amazing and often amusing resilience which carries them through every vicissitude. However, none of his characters could be fitted into the heroic mould. They are too minor in their vision and in their limitations, but Narayan's treatment of these shortcomings succeeds in endearing these characters to the reader. In The Financial Expert we meet Margayya, a flourishing petty financial adviser to the ignorant villagers, who moves onto greater prosperity by publishing mildly pornographic literature. At the peak of his success as a prominent citizen of Malgudi, he loses his wealth in one fell swoop. His economic mishap, the Malgudi equivalent of a Wall Street crash, only succeeds in demoralizing him for a brief moment. In true Narayan style Margayya bounces back to life and resumes his trade under the banyan tree, in defience of the Central Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank whose business he interferes with. We admire Margayya for his financial 'expertise' and for the expeditious manner in which he graduates from the world of finance to that of publishing, of which he knows nothing. We laugh at him and also pity him for his indulgence of his son, who almost ruined his business when, in a tantrum, he flung Margayya's book of accounts into the public gutter. The ease with which Narayan combines the modern

world of commercialism with the ancient superstious Hindu rituals is another indication of the synthesis of his vision in his writing. Margayya locks himself up in his house for a week, following the instructions of the priest who prescribes a complicated series of rituals to ensure Margayya's worldly prosperity. Not only does success follow, but Narayan endows the entire episode with an ironic humour - Margayya embarks, ostensibly with divine aid, on his pornography venture. Even funnier is his account of Margayya's pursuit, for his religious observances, of the unattainable red lotus, the ghee made from the milk of a smoke-coloured cow, not to mention the antelope skin. The tight structure of the novel in which there are no loose ends is evident in the red lotus episode where he meets at the water's edge Dr. Pal, the author of "Bed Life or the Science of Marital Happiness" which elucidating pamphlet sets him on the road to financial prosperity.

Margayya's spirited adventures from one profession to another is also characteristic of Sampath in The Printer of Malgudi. He switches mysteriously but with equal alacrity from printing to film-making, dragging the bewildered Srinivas, who now moves from editorship to the position of script writer, with him. With the collapse of the filming project Sampath is on the loose once more, in search of yet another mysterious occupation. Srinivas' last view of the ex-printer is of the glow of his cigarette which vanishes down the road "like a ruby set in the night" into the unknown. This novel is also a fine example of Narayan's comic writing and contains one of the most humorous episodes, of which there are many, in his novels. The catastrophic filming sequence which is the climax of the novel contains many levels of humour from the burlesque to the satiric and to which he lends some profundity with a touch of pathos. The scene, to begin with, is perfectly ridiculous in its bad imitativeness of even worse Hollywood movies,

with an Indian flavouring to it. Just as things begin to go wrong on the set, Narayan endows the actors with the identity of the characters they are portraying. Thus when Sampath is involved in a dispute, "Into their banter came the voice of Lord Shiva who had been asked to sit rigid in a corner and who had been neglected by everyone."[26] The sense of the ridiculous heightens when Sampath replaces the indignant actor as Shiva, complete with matted hair, tiger skin and, a delightful touch, the live cobra. Narayan's criticism of this type of commercialized celluloid rubbish is clear when he describes the antics of the Hindu deities as being accompanied by a South American tune. The scene reaches the heights of sheer buffoonery when the love-sick Ravi erupts onto the set. The ensuing confusion, with an abducted goddess in the hands of a madman, a total blackout and a loose cobra is delightful. It is tempered, however, by the desperation of Ravi who has been slowly driving himself mad over Shanthi the actress. Thus the scene is simultaneously comic and pathetic.

Narayan is particularly masterful at comic irony and Waiting for the Mahatma is a novel of sustained irony. The setting of the novel is pre-Independence India and the Gandhi movement in particular, but as said earlier, the book cannot be classed in the category of novels which had their origins in this period. The movement is brought to Srinivas's notice only through his discovery and pursuit of feminine charm in the guise of Bharathi, a close associate of Gandhi. Thus, we are brought face to face with the Mahatma only through the reluctant eyes of Srinivas, who would by far have preferred another means of obtaining Bharathi's affection. Narayan's irony is attendant upon Sriram throughout the novel. After almost a quarter century of leading a pleasantly idle existence, he finds himself involved closely with the nationalist movements through the enterpris-

ing Bharathi who effectively keeps him dangling after her, during which time he resides in solitude in ruined temples, sojourns in jail and suffers the rigors of camp life in New Delhi. The single-minded purpose which enables Sriram to endure these travails for Bharathi's sake, is typical of Narayan's characters. Sriram is comical because he never once understands, or wishes to, the nationalist agitation in India - "He hoped Britain would leave India so that he might return to Kabin Street and live in peace with Bharathi and Granny."[27] Thus when he has to paint "Quit India" slogans he mutilates the message to "Ouit India" in an effort to save paint, not caring for the purpose behind his job. Neither slogan, mispelled or not, makes any sense to the villagers as it is in English and with this episode Narayan dismisses the subject of the British altogether.

Narayan's novels are certainly exceptional amongst this body of writing in English. Referring once more to Naipaul's very perceptive criticism of Narayan, he accuses him of a "simplification of reality." By this he means that Narayan, in his vision of India, saw an "order and continuity ... in the dereliction and smallness of India..." and that "to enter into his ironic acceptance and relish his comedy, was to ignore too much of what could be seen..." (p. 13) For the purposes of this chapter it is enough to accept Naipaul's observations without criticizing Narayan. The latter's achievement in fact lies in his success in creating a fictitious world around Malgudi. It is proof of his artistry as a writer, combined with a brilliant feel for character and situation which are indisputably Indian.

Conclusion

The vision of India in the novels of both western and Indian writers is that of a society in a state of flux. The first group of novelists, as westerners, have been primarily concerned with the adjustments and challenges of living in a foreign environment. Thus, Forster, Scott and Jhabvala have portrayed various stages of the British encounter with India, from the colonial to post-colonial era. Amongst these writers special mention must be made of Forster, Woolf and Scott, whose critical approach to the British imperial presence and their attempt to enter the Indian camp, so to speak, have provided English literature with yet another dimension of experience, particularly in the area of the novel. However, in this aspect of the western writers interest in India there is an exception in Kipling, whose novel Kim is an example of the exotic tale set in a distant land. Both these types of novels, realistic and romantic, find in their views a balance in the writings of V. S. Naipaul who, in the position of an interested observer, passes comment on the British Empire in India, tempered by a bleak view of Indian civilization itself.

We find a parallel to Naipaul in the second chapter in Nirad Chaudhuri's Autobiography, which deals with the question of India's response to the west. His historical approach to this issue sets him apart from the other Indian writers in this section. Most of them, including Sahgal, Markandaya and Rama Rau, are overwhelmingly concerned with their own immediate problems in searching for an identity in a class of Indian society which is struggling between its 'British'ness and a consciousness, newly found, of its 'Indian'ness. In Anand and Markandaya, the portrayal of conflict-shifts to indigenous surroundings and takes on a different character, that of an economic and

class struggle within the tightly ordered social scale in India. The exception to both these issues is the world of R. K. Narayan's novels. His characters are not concerned with crises of identity and nationhood. Instead they move within a society that is well defined and understood, following their own devices with assurance. As said earlier, Narayan has been accused of creating an unreal world. In this aspect, Narayan may be closest to Kipling among the writers in the first chapter. Narayan's artistry is superior to Kipling's, however, so that while we can criticize the latter for his lack of realism, we tend to accept Narayan's portrayal of Indian life more easily.

A comprehensive view of the writers in this chapter, leaves one with the conviction that Forster's ultimate statement on India - "the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble so tiresomely" - is probably the wisest. Any or all of the individual visions put forward by these writers has some validity in contributing towards an overall portrait of the nature of the Indian sub-continent. The varying degrees of success with which they do so is a reflection of their particular abilities as writers.

Reference Footnotes

Only first references to a work will be fully noted below. Further references to a work used extensively will appear in the text.

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